

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ISLAMA 02312 040814Z

21

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 OFA-01 EB-07

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4420

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMCONSUL PESHAWAR UNN

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 2312

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PK, IN, PFOR, EFIS

SUBJECT: SEIZURE OF PAK AND INDIAN FISHING VESSELS

1. PAK PRESS HAS RECENTLY CARRIED SEVERAL STOREIS CLAIMING INDIAN NAVY HAS PICKED UP PAK FISHING VESSELS IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS AND IS HOLDING SHIPS AND CREWS ON KATHIWAR PENINSULA NEAR KUTCH. ARTICLES NOTE GOP HAS PROTESTED TO GOI CONCERNING VIOLATION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW AND PAK FISHERMEN HAVE DEMANDED GOP TAKE EFFECTIVE STEPS TO OBTAIN RELEASE OF DETAINED CREWS. VERNACULAR PRESS EDITORIAL MARCH SECOND URGES GOP TO TAKE ACTION TO STOP ACTIVITIES OF INDIAN NAVY, AND ISSUE WAS RAISED MARCH THIRD DURING QUESTION HOUR IN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

2. HAYAT MEHDI (MFA DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR SOUTH ASIA) TOLD EMBOFF MARCH THIRD THERE HAS BEEN A HISTORY OF PAK AND INDIAN NAVIES PICKING UP THE OTHERS FISHING VESSELS ON GROUNDS OF VIOLATION OF TERRITORIAL WATERS. THERE HAD BEEN ONE OR TWO INCIDENTS YEARLY, UNTIL ABOUT THREE MONTHS AGO WHEN NUMBER ESCALATED. MEHDI SAID THAT SO FAR EACH SIDE HAD SEIZED ABOUT FIVE VESSELS AND CREWS. HE ADDED HE DID NOT KNOW WHY THE NUMBER OF SEIZURES HAD INCREASED IN RECENT MONTHS, BUT IT WAS UNDERSTANDABLE THAT SHIPS WORKING CLOSE TO INDO-PAK BORDER, WITH POOR NAVIGATIONAL AIDS, MIGHT STRAY INTO OTHER COUNTRY'S TERRITORIA WATERS.

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3. MEHDI DID NOT SAY HOW MANY CREWMEN EACH SIDE WAS HOLDING,
BUT NOTED THAT SINCE EACH NOW HAD ABOUT AN EQUAL NUMBER OF SHIPS,
HE WAS ATTEMPTING TO ARRANGE AN EXCHANGE OF SHIPS AND CREWS AND
WAS HOPEFUL THIS ISSUE WOULD SOON BE RESOLVED.
BYROADE

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